

## Visual Representation of Social Actors in ELT Nursery Rhymes

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**Abstract:** With the advent of globalization, especially in its third phase (see Robertson, 2003), global relations of domination have undermined abuse of power at national and local levels (Fairclough, 2001). Global ELT textbooks, as corollaries of the globalization process, are not immune to the embedment of discriminatory discourses, as various studies have shown (see for example, Gray, 2010, 2012; Babaii and Sheikhi, 2017). On the other hand, a social actor analysis of verbal and visual discourse will contribute significantly to the disclosure of discriminatory discourses (see van Leeuwen, 2008; Hart, 2014). The current study, therefore, reduces the gap in research on ideology of ELT materials by probing into the nursery rhymes in children and young-adult ELT textbooks. Visual representation of social actors in the images accompanying nursery rhymes in *Magic Time*, *English Time*, *Let's Go* and *Family and Friends* were, thus, examined, using van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. Regarding results, the most frequent exclusionary discourses in the corpus included religion, nationality, race, and gender respectively. Significantly, it was found that monochromatic depiction of social actors constituted a strategy for the discursive construction of otherness in *Family and Friends*. Additionally, a process, called *whitenization of blacks* in the terminology of the current study, was found to be at work in which blacks were depicted as having the facial features of whites.

**Keywords:** global domination, visual social actors, global ELT textbooks, whitenization of blacks.

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## Introduction

Contemporary globalization is a ubiquitous process which has transformed social life across domains as various as economy, politics, and culture (see el-Ojeli and Hayden, 2006). Against the backdrop of optimistic stances on globalization, some scholars have sounded notes of caution regarding its adverse effects in terms particularly of global hegemonic control (see Robinson, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2006, among others). A significant aspect of globalization contributing to the (continued) dominance of global powers is the *discourse of globalization*, as noted by Fairclough (2006). Therefore, any account of globalization, which disregards the globalization discourse, will amount to little by way of providing an all-encompassing account. Discourse, according to Fairclough (2006), can, among other things, promote a particular perspective on globalization, to the benefit of a particular group as well as to the dissemination of certain ideologies.

In order to account for the complex ways social control is maintained, oftentimes to the benefit of the powerful groups, critical discourse studies (CDS) investigates the possible connections between the norms and values incorporated in discourse and the wider sociopolitical context that gives rise to it (Paltridge, 2006). In fact, discourse, be it monomodal or multimodal, serves to naturalize and universalize, through embedment of commonsensical assumptions (Fairclough 1989, 2001), the ideological perspectives and worldviews of the powerful groups. Institutional discourse at both “global and national/local” (Fairclough, 2001, p.203) levels plays a pivotal role in this respect. At national/local levels, institutional discourse serves to win the consent of the governed by inculcating them with the mentalities and worldviews in the best interests of the powerful groups. In a similar vein, at global levels, institutional discourse can be said to represent an attempt to ensure the hegemonic control of transnational institutions over the collective minds of individual nations (see Robinson, 2005). This form of power abuse leads to various types of social inequalities. The job of critical discourse analysts, therefore, is to examine discourse for the possible inclusion of ideologies in the best interests of the powerful group, and to subsequently expose the niceties of the ways the dominated are manipulated into seeing those ideologies as natural and taken-for-granted.

Institutional discourse, particularly on the global scale, comprises a fruitful area of investigation for critical discourse analysts as it embeds and promotes the ideologies of the

powerful groups and, thus, paves the way for their hegemonic control in such domains as politics, economy, and culture (see Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Exploring global educational discourse is of vital significance as "educational institutions provide one of the major mechanisms through which power is maintained and challenged" (Apple, 2004, p. vii). Numerous research studies have probed into the ideologies of ELT materials on both national and global scales. Neoliberalism (Babaii and Sheikhi, 2017), culture (Shin, Salami, and Chen, 2011), racism (van Dijk, 2004), gender (Giaschi, 2000), and new capitalism (Gray, 2010) are among the ideologies based on which ELT materials have been investigated. In fact, these studies examined the way ELT materials hinder, rather than contribute to, the "social transformation and improvement of society" (Akbari, 2008, p. 642).

The current study is a further contribution to the wealth of existing literature on the ideology of global ELT materials by examining the images accompanying nursery rhymes in global young-adult ELT textbooks. A nursery rhyme is a text that aims to teach a given language point to young learners by means of entertainment. Despite the significance of entertaining contexts in reference to their ideological import (van Leeuwen, 2008), few studies were found to have explored nursery rhymes from an ideological perspective (Hawkins, 1971; Blake, 1975; Muwati, Tembo, and Mutasa, 2016). No studies were, however, found to have examined nursery rhymes in global ELT materials. To reduce this gap, this study examined the images accompanying nursery rhymes in the *Magic Time*, *English Time*, *Let's Go*, and *Family and Friends*, using van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for the visual construction of social actors.

## Review of Literature

### Theoretical Perspectives

Globalization is a ubiquitous social process which has been approached and defined from a variety of divergent, competing perspectives (see el-Ojeili and Hayden, 2006, among others). Whereas consensus is nowhere to be found regarding the precise definition of what globalization consists of, Fairclough's (2006) definition will be cited:

a complex, interconnected but partly autonomous set of processes affecting many dimensions of social life (economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, military and so forth) which contribute changes in the spatial organization, social activity and interaction, social relations and relations of power, producing ever more intensive, extensive and rapid interconnections, interdependencies and

flows on a global scale and between the global scale and other (macro-regional, national, local, etc.) scales (p. 142).

Moreover, Robinson (2007) draws a number of generalizations regarding globalization including a dramatic increase in the pace of social transformation, unprecedented interconnectedness among nations along with an awareness of such a phenomenon, and the ubiquity and multi-dimensionality of globalization. Similarly, citing Cochrane and Pain (2000), el-Ojeili and Hayden (2006) state that globalization is characterized, among other things, by the existence of institutional infrastructure which allows for the operation of globalization worldwide.

Relevant to the focus of the current study are the critical-oriented and discourse-focused approaches to the study of globalization (see the edited volume by Appelbaum and Robinson, 2005; Robinson, 2005; Fairclough, 2006, among others). Fairclough (2006), makes a distinction between the actual processes of globalization and discourses of globalization and stresses that discourse not only represents globalization but also actively contributes to the process of globalization. Therefore, to him, globalization is partly discursive as discourse can, among other things, misrepresent globalization by providing biased information, favor a particular approach to globalization in a way that fits the interests of a powerful group, and disseminate certain ideologies which lead to the sustenance of unequal power relations. Additionally, discourse plays a central role in the advancement of the ideological interests of the powerful groups (see Fairclough, 2006). For example, globalization has been shown to play a role in the spread of gender inequality (Pyle, 2005) and racism (Winant, 2005), among others.

In modern societies, especially with the advent of globalization, social control is largely maintained through ideology (see Fairclough, 2001; Steger, 2005) the significance of which lies in its capacity to enact and legitimize power (van Dijk, 2008). Simply put, ideology can be considered as a set of ideas a person or a collective holds. Friedrich (1989) defines ideology as a set of “ideas, rationalization, and interpretations that mask or gloss over a struggle to get or hold onto power, particularly economic power, with the result that actors and ideologues are largely unaware of what is going on” (p. 302). To Blommaert (2005), it is the common sense that results in the naturalized patterns of thought and behavior on the part of the public and contributes to the maintenance of social structures and power relations. Additionally, Althusser's (1971) conceptualization of ideology has been quite influential. He distinguishes between two apparatuses at the state's disposal to ensure their domination;

Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). Whereas the former includes such departments as army and police which have monopoly over the use of violence, the latter encompasses institutions such as family, church, education, and media. ISAs draw on what Althusser calls ‘interpellation’ referring to how subjects are socially labeled (Janks and Ivanic, 1992). Interpellation positions social subjects in certain ways based on their gender, class, and ethnicity, to name just a few with which the subjects are expected to conform (Benesch, 2006). Obviously then, ideology, as a negatively conceptualized concept, is regarded as an apparatus at the service of power holders contributing to unequal power relations and, thus, to social inequalities. Regarded from the globalization viewpoint, it can be stated that ISAs also include transnational organizations such as the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) the discourses of which serve to inculcate their audiences with ideological agendas in the best interest of the powerful groups (see Robinson, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2006, for details on the way transnational institutions contribute to social inequalities).

Critical discourse analysts have not been unaware of the rudimentary role ideology plays in the sustenance of domination. The reason why they engage in discourse analysis is that discourse is the primary means through which ideologies find expression (Fairclough, 2001). In CDS, a contrast is often made between social practices and their discursive representations (van Leeuwen, 2008) as discursive representations may eliminate crucial information regarding the represented social practices to better suit the interests of the dominant groups. An example in this regard would be the constraints on content, positions, and relations that powerful participants can impose on the contributions of the less powerful ones in a given discourse type (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Besides, what social actors are included, back-grounded, or suppressed in reference to a given social practice is oftentimes a question of ideology (van Leeuwen, 2008).

According to Althusser (1971), various state-related institutions such as education, media, family, and church serve ideological purposes and, thus, contribute to the maintenance of the state’s hegemonic control over the subjects. The role of institutional discourse, especially at the global level, cannot be overestimated in this regard. The third stage of globalization (Robertson, 2003) is characterized by the emergence of a growing number of transnational institutions whose influences have overstepped the boundaries of traditional nation-states. This leads to the ideological subjugation of the less powerful nation-states by

the transnational institutions. It will, therefore, be indispensable for critical discourse analysts to critically probe institutional discourse at the global level and make visible the possible connections between the norms and values embedded in them and the social structures and power relations on the international scale.

A significant consequence of the emergence of English as an international language (EIL) has been that of marginalization and hegemony (Sharifian, 2009) at the global level. It will, therefore, be worthwhile to critically analyze the discourse of such an emerging paradigm (Sharifian, 2009) in order to determine the extent to which it furthers certain ideologies. There is a wealth of literature on the ideology of global ELT materials (Giaschi, 2000, Ansary and Babaii, 2003; van Dijk, 2004; Taki, 2008; Gray, 2010, 2012; Tajeddin and Teimournezhad, 2014; Babaii, Atai, and Kafshgarsouteh, 2016, Babaii and Sheikhi, 2017). Only a few, however, have adopted van Leeuwen's framework (Babaii, Atai, and Kafshgarsouteh, 2016). Van Leeuwen (2008) uses the concept of *social practice* and examines the way the elements of social practice are manipulated to better represent the ideologies of the text producer. A key element of van Leeuwen's framework is that of the visual representation of social actors which embody two aspects: the way social actors are depicted in the images and the way the depicted social actors relate to the viewer.

Finally, two important notes are in order. Firstly, despite the wealth of critical research on the ideology of global ELT materials, no studies were found to have examined nursery rhymes in ELT textbooks. On the other hand, whereas research on nursery rhymes has mainly concentrated on the educational applications of nursery rhymes with very few studies having examined their cultural or ideological import, no studies were found to have analyzed the nursery rhymes in global ELT textbooks.

### **A Selective Review of Empirical Studies**

Gray (2010) examined the evolvement of the new capitalism discourse in a number of global textbooks by focusing specifically on the way the world of work was represented in the textbooks. He was particularly concerned with the codification of new capitalist values such as self-programmable labor and zero drag in work-related texts in his corpus. In order to analyze the data, he conducted quantitative-qualitative content analysis of the corpus. The analysis of the corpus revealed that, in general, there was a tendency on the part of textbook writers and publishers to present the world of work from an individualistic perspective and as a means for the full realization of the self.

Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2011) examined the cultural content of seven series of international English textbooks from the perspective of EIL (English as an international language). They adopted a mixed-methods research design. To analyze the data, they examined the cultural content of the textbooks from the two perspectives of aspects of cultures and levels of cultural presentation. They, then, subdivided aspects of culture into inner circle, outer circle, and others. Finally, the analysis of the level was further divided into knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented contents. As with the aspect analysis, it was shown that cultural content related to the inner circle rather than the outer circle was predominant in all examined textbooks. As to the level of cultural presentation, it was revealed that the textbooks are biased towards heavy presentation of knowledge-oriented level of cultural presentation.

Cheng and Beigi (2012) explored the interconnectedness of religion and education in the EFL (English as a foreign language) textbooks prepared by the ministry of education in Iran. The *Right Path to English Series* formed their corpus. Having aimed at the awareness-raising of research community, educators, and teachers, they carried out their analysis in three phases: firstly, they scanned the corpus in order to quantify the religious concepts in both linear (textual) and nonlinear (pictorial) contents. Next, the researchers conducted a content analysis of the data in terms of the culture and religion and to determine the extent to which the propagation of religion was (co)vert. Finally, the coverage of religion in the textbooks was connected to issues of identity and nation building. The authors included that the covert propagation of religion, at the expense of exclusion of secular values or other religious minorities, should not be viewed as contributing to social inequality as 99% of the Iranian population are Muslims.

Babaii, Atai, and Kafshgarsoureh (2016) investigated the representation of verbal and visual various races in four of the award-winning English-learning software packages, namely, *Rosetta Stone*, *Tell Me More*, *Fairyland*, and *Your Baby Can Read*. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework for the analysis of visual grammar as well as van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for the analysis of verbal and visual social actors were drawn on for the analysis of the social actors. The results of the study showed that, overall, there was a bias towards race in images rather than texts. More specifically, *Fairyland* and *Your Baby Can Read*, aimed at children, were not explicitly biased towards any race whereas *Tell Me More* and *Rosetta Stone*, which are designed for adults, showed implicit or explicit patterns of bias towards different races.

Hawkins (1971) conducted a comparative analysis of the nursery rhymes in a number of cultures. Hawkins was interested in the way the nursery rhymes reflected various aspects of the target cultures. The analysis of the data showed that there were differences between the vocabularies used in the nursery rhymes. For example, Chinese verses included words such as oil, bean cakes, rice soup, and chest protectors whereas American rhymes represented words related to accelerated technology such as sewing machines, telephone, and railroads. Besides, Hawkins points out that the rhymes also reflect the attitudes of the society and the times. Hawkins points to the class barriers in effect from the sixteenth to eighteenth century England and the importance of marriage to someone of a higher social class as the only means of raising one's position in the society that was reflected in the nursery rhymes.

Blake (1975) examined mother goose rhymes belonging to the pre-industrial era with reference to their importance in shedding further light on a better understanding of the history, especially the way the rhymes reflect the life styles and the assumptions of the English people. The rhymes he examined not only depicted a rural picture of the then society filled with rustic simplicity and occasional violence, but also pointed to the existence of a stratified society as well as to the social attitudes. The results of the data showed that the rhymes depict a male-dominated society which tended to blame the wife as the source of marital strife. Moreover, it was revealed that they reflected a stratified view of the society into which they were born. Blake comes to the conclusion that the rhymes not only provide the children with an opportunity to escape into fantasy, but also play a significant role in the maintenance of the current social order and an inculcation of social morality.

As the above-mentioned studies show, despite the conduction of critical studies on global ELT materials and nursery rhymes alike, no research has been carried out on the nursery rhymes of ELT textbooks. In order to narrow this gap, the current study examined the way social actors were visually represented in the nursery rhymes of four series of ELT textbooks for children and young-adult learners. More specifically, the current study attempted to examine whether or not the visual social actors in the four textbook series were differentially represented and, if so, how it was achieved.

### **The Present Study**

The current study explored the way social actors were visually represented in the nursery rhymes of four series of ELT textbooks for children and young-adult learners. In order to do this, the following research question was posed:

1. What social actors are visually included, back-grounded, or suppressed in the images accompanying nursery rhymes in young-adult ELT textbooks?

## Method

### Textbook Corpus

Given the significance of entertaining texts in disseminating ideologies in modern societies (van Leeuwen, 2008), selection of these four textbook series was warranted as they draw partly on nursery rhymes, as entertaining texts, for educational purposes. The corpus of the current study comprised the four ELT textbooks published by the Oxford University Press which include *Magic Time*, *English Time*, *Let's Go*, and *Family and Friends*. The *Magic Time* series (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) is a primary two-level English course aimed at learners of early elementary school authored by Kampa and Vilina (2012) accompanied by the six-level *English Time* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), authored by Rivers and Tomaya (2011). Similarly, the *Let's Go* series (4<sup>th</sup> edition) is a primary seven-level English course aimed at children authored by Nakata, Frazier, Hoskins, and Graham (2012). Finally, the *Family and Friends* constitutes a six-level English course, authored by Quintana, Simmons, and Thompson (2010), which is designed for young-adult language learners.

### Data Analysis Frameworks

Van Leeuwen's framework (2008) for the analysis of visual social actors was adopted in the current study. It is a subcomponent of the more comprehensive framework in which he elaborates on the way elements of social practice undergo changes when represented discursively as a result of the exercise of power. The framework is comprised of two aspects: the way social actors are depicted in the images and the way the depicted social actors relate to the viewer. The former includes the strategies of exclusion, roles, specific/generic, individual/group, and cultural/biological categorization whereas the latter constitutes distance, angle, and gaze.

Since van Leeuwen (2008) does not elaborate on the strategy of exclusion, and due to its significance for a more precise data analysis, McIntosh's (1988) typology of privilege was adapted for the categorization of the strategy of exclusion. The adaptation includes the selection of those elements of privilege which seems relevant to the current study. These elements include gender, race, nationality, and religion. As with the roles, broad categories, namely, education, entertainment, family, personal, and society were adopted. Examples of educational roles include studying, going to school, and playing at school. Kids' play, sports,

watching movies, singing, zoos, among other things, were considered as examples of entertainment. Familial gatherings and doing household chores included familial roles. 'Personal' as another category of roles included the cases in which an individually depicted social actor engaged in, say, physical or intellectual actions such as holding an object and reading a newspaper. Society, on the other hand, included social interactions in the social context examples of which constitute conversation and shopping. There are two parts to the strategy of roles; the social actors can either take an action with each other or to each other.

Visual social actors can be represented specifically as individuals, or generally, as social types, through hairdo, dress, and status accessories. General negative depiction of social actors is considered to be racist or, at least, biased (van Leeuwen, 2008). Since all social actors in corpus were generally represented, this category was excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, depictions may show social actors individually or in groups, which in the case of collective depiction, the social actors may be homogeneously represented. Besides, homogeneous depiction of social actors is a strategy for constructing otherness. Finally, representation of social actors in group can be carried out through cultural or biological categorization. Cultural categorization constitutes standard attributes such as dress, hairdo whereas biological categorization refers to the exaggerations of physical features.

Social actors can, also, be represented in terms of the way they relate to the viewer. The first category is that of distance. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a variety of shots can be identified. For the current study, three broad shots, namely, close, medium, and long were adopted. The close shot was defined as showing head and shoulders of the social actor. The medium shot showed a range of right below the shoulders to full figure. Anything wider than the full figure was defined as long shot. The second category is that of the angle. There are two aspects to it; the vertical angle which shows power differences and the horizontal angle which shows involvement. Since the horizontal angle does not constitute a strategy of otherness (van Leeuwen, 2008), it was excluded from the analysis. The third part is that of the gaze through which social actors can symbolically interact with the viewer.

Finally, leaving aside theoretical debates on the exact nature of race (interested readers are referred to Omi and Winant, 2014), the current study draws on the simplistic division of races into white (Caucasian), Asian (Mongoloid), and black (Negroid), among others, as this tripartite divisions fits neatly with the visual data in the current study. Moreover, American Indians were categorized as a separate category.

## Results

The current study explored the included, back-grounded, or suppressed social actors in the images accompanying nursery rhymes in global ELT textbooks. What follows is the visual summation of the main findings in the four textbook series.

**Magic Time:** The first category in van Leeuwen's framework is that of exclusion. To analyze the extent to which social actors have been excluded, adapting McIntosh (1988), gender, race, nationality, and religion were considered as relevant aspects for the current study. As for gender, the analysis of the data showed, as shown in image 1 below, that neither of the genders was either excluded although female social actors were slightly favored. Regarding race, it was found that racial bias did appear in the corpus as it was found that, the vast majority of the visual social actors were whites, followed respectively by Asians, and blacks, as shown in image 2 below. The next category of exclusion was that of nationality which, like race, appeared to be biased towards Americans. Only Americans and East-Asians appeared in the corpus at the expense of other nationalities as can be seen in images 1 and 2 below. Finally, regarding religion, it was found that no reference of made to the religious beliefs and practices of the social actors, as is seen in images 1 and 2 below.

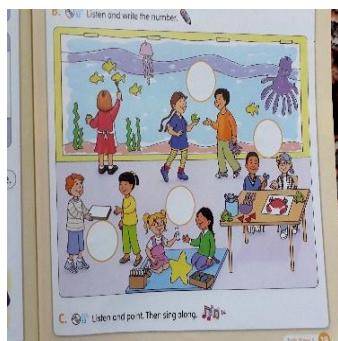


Image 1

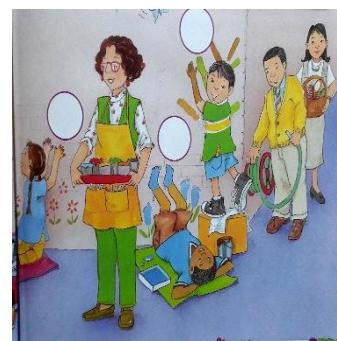


Image 2

The second aspect of the visual representation of social actors is that of the roles they play. In the majority of the images, the social actors were playing roles with each other rather than to each other, as can be seen in the images provided below. The most salient aspect of the roles social actors played in *Magic Time 1* was that of entertainment. Even when appeared in educational or familial contexts, they seemed to be engaged in primarily entertainment roles as shown in images 3 and 4 below. Similarly, in the case of *Magic Time 2*, the most salient role that the social actors appeared in was that of entertainment. It differed

from *Magic Time 1*, in that the social actors also, though very rarely, did appear in familial, societal, and personal roles, as can be seen in images 4 through 6.

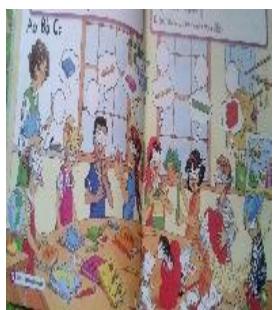


Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6

The third part of the framework includes homogeneity, biological, and cultural categorization. In the case of homogeneity, it was found that in a few images at least two of the social actors were homogeneously represented due to wearing performance costume or work and sports uniform as is seen in image 7. In terms of biological categorization, it was found that the vast majority of social actors have been depicted as possessing the standard attributes such as delicate features, slim build, smooth hairdo, and neat dress. A significant finding of the study, regarding the biological categorization of the social actors was the way blacks were biologically portrayed. Indeed, it was found that, in approximately half of the depictions in which black social actors appeared, they were *whitenedized*, that is, they appeared as lacking one or more of the facial features often associated with blacks, namely, flat nose, thick lips, and curly hair. This was particularly true in the case of lips. As with the cultural categorization, all social actors were depicted as possessing standard attributes of dress, hairdo, build, and smile. Moreover, the status accessories for the social actors were present and included, for the most part, sports and work uniform. The analysis of the data, as can be seen in images 7 and 8, showed that, overall, the social status appeared rather infrequently.

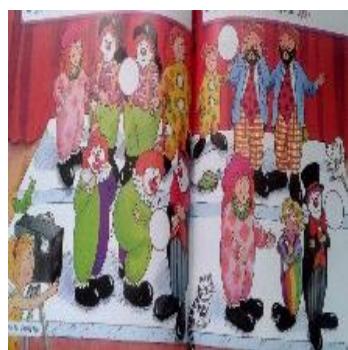


Image 7

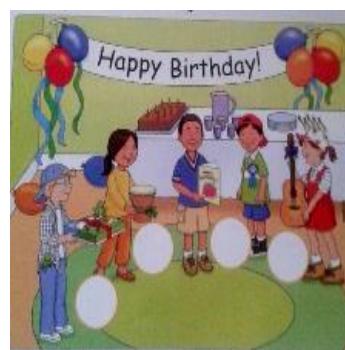


Image 8

Finally, comes the category of social relation which falls into distance, angle, and gaze. Regarding distance, most social actors appeared in long shot followed by medium shot with no actors in the close shot. This is obvious in the images above. As for angle, it was revealed that all social actors appeared at the eye-level. Finally, as regards gaze, it was found that the balance of social actors appeared as not gazing, as can be witnessed from images 1 through 8.

**English Time:** The *English Time* series was also analyzed for the way social actors are visually represented in terms of exclusion, roles, categorization, and relations. Like *Magic Time*, the *English Time series* showed various patterns regarding the strategy of exclusion. It was found that gender was roughly equally represented, as shown in image 9, even though female social actors were slightly more frequently represented. Unlike *Magic Time*, however, only two races were included with the majority of the social actors belonging to the white race and only few of them being black. Moreover, it was found that the process of *whitenization* was at work for the majority of the represented blacks (see image 10 below). The representation of race is shown in image 10. Regarding the representation of nationality, it was found that only one nationality, i.e., American, was represented. Finally, religion did not appear in the corpus.



Image 9

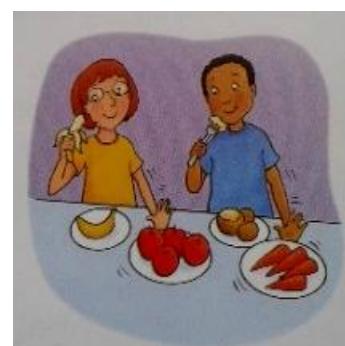


Image 10

In a similar vein, the *English Time series* revealed a similar pattern to that of the *Magic Time series* in that the social actors appeared most frequently in entertainment roles (image 11). Next, the social actors appeared, almost equally, in societal, familial, and personal roles respectively (images 12, 13, and 14). Finally, there were a few cases in which the social actors appeared in educational roles. In the majority of the images, the social actors were playing roles with each other rather than to each other, as can be seen in the images provided below.



Image 11



Image 12



Image 13



Image 14

Homogeneous representation of social actors in the *English Time series*, unlike the *Magic Time series*, did not appear (see images 11 through to 13 above). Whitenization, on the other hand, was quite common in the *English Time series* (image 15). Regarding cultural categorization, all social actors were portrayed as having standard attributes of dress, hairdo, build, and smile. As for the status accessories for the social actors, it was found that they were present and included, for the most part, school, sports and work uniform as well as the related tools and equipment (images 16 and 17). The analysis of the data, as can be seen in images 16 and 17, showed that the social status appeared only rarely.

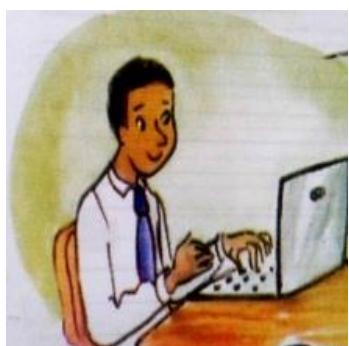


Image 15

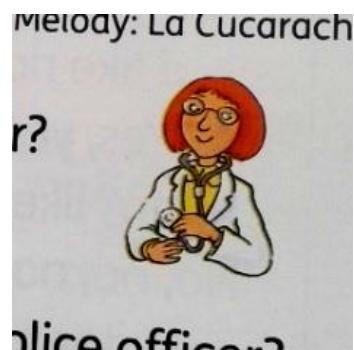


Image 16



Image 17

Regarding relation, *English Time* was similar to *Magic Time* when it comes to angle and gaze. All social actors appeared at the eye-level and only a few social actors were portrayed as gazing at the viewer (images 18 and 19). They were different, however, in that in *Magic Time*, the long shot was the most frequent one whereas in *English Time*, the most frequent shot was the medium one. Following the medium shot, the long shot and the close one were most frequent in *English Time*.

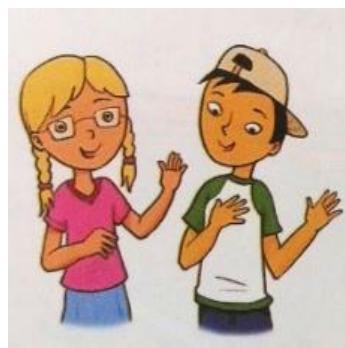


Image 18



Image 19

**Let's Go:** Regarding gender, as the first category of exclusion, female social actors were slightly more frequently represented, as was the case with *English Time* and *Magic Time* (image 20). Regarding race, as the analysis showed, the *Let's Go series* represented the widest variety of racial types. Whites, blacks, Asians and American Indians were represented (images 20 and 22). Like *Magic Time* and *English Time*, however, whites have been privileged to the marginalization of other races. The next frequent races that appeared in *Let's Go* were blacks, Asians, and Indians respectively. The same holds true regarding nationality. The balance of the social actors is of American decent. Next come East Asians followed by Italians respectively. Like *Magic Time* and *English Time*, no reference was made in the images in *Let's Go* to the religious beliefs and practices of the social actors.



Image 20



Image 21



Image 22

As for the roles, it needs mentioning that in the majority of the images, the social actors were playing roles with each other rather than to each other, as can be seen in the images provided below. The most frequent roles in which the social actors appeared roughly equally were familial and entertainment ones respectively (images 23 and 24). The second frequent

roles in which the social actors appeared were those of personal and societal ones respectively (images 25 and 26). The least frequent role was that of the educational one which least infrequently represented (image 25)

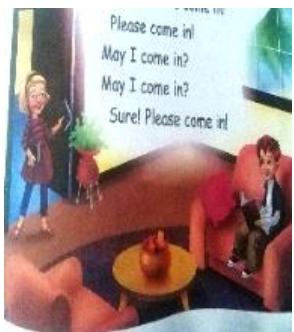


Image 23



Image 24



Image 25



Image 26

There were several images in which the social actors were homogeneously represented through uniform (image 27) which is in agreement with the way *Magic Time* and *English Time* have dealt with it. In a similar vein, *whitenization* of blacks was a common phenomenon in the *Let's Go series* (image 28). Regarding cultural categorization, all social actors were portrayed as having standard attributes of dress, hairdo, build, and smile. As for the status accessories for the social actors, it was found that they were present and included, for the most part, school, sports and work uniform as well as the related tools and equipment (image 27). What is more, all social actors were represented at the eye-level and few of them were portrayed as gazing (images 27 through 29). Finally, as regards distance, it was found that medium shot was the most frequent shot. The second frequent shot was that of the long shot followed by the close one (image 29).

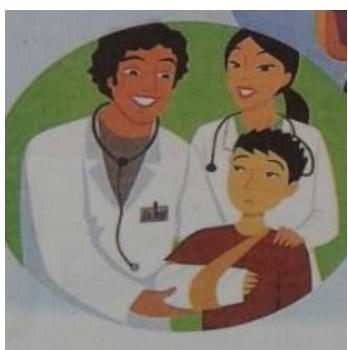


Image 27

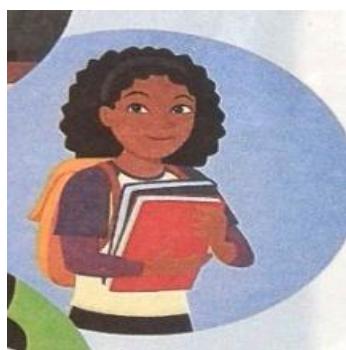


Image 28



Image 29

**Family and Friends:** Unlike *Magic Time*, *English Time*, and *Let's Go*, male social actors were slightly more frequently represented in the *Family and Friends series* (image 30). Regarding race, it was found that whites were almost exclusively represented in the images to the marginalization or exclusion of other races. In very few of the images, blacks, and, in one image, an Asian were represented (images 31 and 32). As with nationality, only Americans were represented with the exception of one image in which one East-Asian social actor appeared. Moreover, religion was excluded.



Image 30



Image 31



Image 32

Regarding roles, in the majority of the images, the social actors were playing roles with each other rather than to each other, as can be seen in the images provided below. Unlike the first three textbook series in this section, social actors in the *Family and Friends series* were more equally engaged in different roles although, just like other textbook series, entertainment was the most frequent role. The second frequent role was that of society followed by family. Finally, education appeared slightly less frequently than family and slightly more than the personal role (images 32 through 36).



Image 32



Image 33



Image 34



Image 35

Homogeneous representation of social actors figured rather importantly in *Family and Friends* in that the social actors appeared both in school, work, or sports uniform (image 36)

and through monochromatic representation in the case of the construction of past lifestyle in a handful of images. It was found that images portraying scientific explorations or great scientific achievements and inventions were hetero-chromatically depicted whereas the handful of images portraying past lifestyle were monochromatically depicted. As can be seen, images 36, 37, and 38 show monochromatic as well as heterochromatic construction of the past in the *Family and Friends*. Moreover, *whitenization* appeared to be the case when it came to the depiction of blacks. Concerning cultural categorization, all social actors were portrayed as having standard attributes of dress, hairdo, build, and smile. As for the status accessories for the social actors, it was found that they were present and included, for the most part, school, sports and work uniform as well as the related tools and equipment (images 36 and 37).

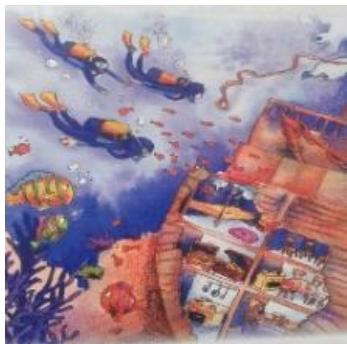


Image 36



Image 37



Image 38

The final aspect of the representation of the social actors was that of relations in which all social actors appeared at the eye-level with only few of them gazing at the viewer (image 39). Finally, the most frequent shot was that of the medium one followed by long and close shot (images 39 through 41).



Image 39



Image 40

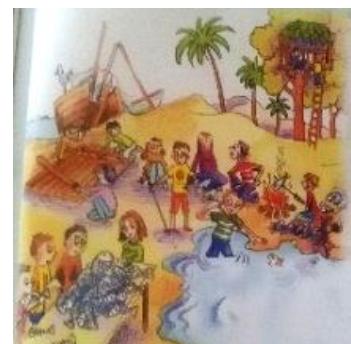


Image 41

## Discussion

With the advent of the third stage of globalization (Robertson, 2003), global institutions have increasingly relied on interpellation, as the crucial tool of hegemony (Holborow, 2006), for the sustenance of their hegemonic control. In line with this general trend, global educational institutions have frequently incorporated ideological perspectives of the targeted language community (Gray, 2010, 2012; Babaii and Sheikhi, 2017; Giaschi, 2010). The results of the current study, for the most part, confirm the findings of the previous studies. In line with other related studies on gender bias in ELT textbooks (Giaschi, 2010), it was found that, albeit slightly, such a bias against females did exist in the *Family and Friends series*. With other three textbook series, namely, *Magic Time*, *English Time*, and *Let's Go*, however, the bias was found to be slightly towards female social actors. This runs counter to the findings of the previous studies which generally turn out to favor male social actors. A possible reason for the fairer treatment of female social actors in the three of the textbooks may be rooted in the fact that children education has traditionally been the realm of women. This is particularly obvious in the teaching roles of the social actors in the corpus of the current study. In the *Let's Go series*, out of the 5 images of classrooms, three teachers were female.

Regarding race, as the findings of the study show, whites have been clearly privileged to the exclusion or marginalization of other races. This is in line with the findings of other studies on racism (Duren, 2000; van Dijk, 2004; Blackledge, 2006; Babaii and Sheikhi, 2017). This finding is in line with that of van Dijk (2004) who found that, at the national level, the discursive representation of racism was a major theme in Spanish textbooks. In addition, the findings substantiate the idea that entertaining contexts remain a significant site for the embedment of racist ideologies (van Leeuwen, 2008, Middy and MacCann, 2009). A far more grievous facet of racism was related to the biological categorization of black social actors. In a process called the *whitenization of blacks* in the current study, in all the four textbooks series, black social actors were often depicted as having one or more of the facial features, such as thin lips, and straight noses, typically associated with the whites. This racist move goes a step beyond the well-documented strategy of negative-other presentation as such a strategy would have necessitated a gross exaggeration of blacks' facial features. Therefore, it can be argued that the *whitenization* process represents an exclusionary strategy distinct from that of negative-other presentation which leads, ultimately, to the marginalization of blacks on a global scale. It may be the case that a combination of the dichotomous strategies of positive-self presentation and negative-other presentation is at work where whites are represented as ideal biological models to be desired by blacks.

Exclusion also proved to be at work when it comes to nationality. As the findings of the study show, except for a rare number of cases, in which social actors of other nations were visually represented, the American nationality prevailed. This is clearly a visual embodiment of the way the powerful participants, in this case the global textbook publisher, places constraints on the contents of the social practice, e.g., various nationalities across the globe, on the contributions of the less powerful participants, in this case the language learners across the globe, which leads naturally to greater solidarity with the discursively represented nationality on the part of the language learners, with the target nation. Furthermore, the national bias can be viewed from the perspective of the recent interest ELT for national security purposes (Edge, 2003; Kubota, 2006). That is to say, through the implemented strategy of national exclusion, the examined global textbooks will allow for the solidarity, on the part of the language learners across the globe, which will, in turn, facilitate the sustenance of their global hegemonic control. Moreover, it can be argued that the nationality agenda, promoted by the analyzed textbooks, can be viewed as “an investment in national capability, and a resource advancing national security” (Bianco, 2002, p. 9).

Religion is the most radically excluded category in the corpus. In fact, it can be argued that resort to the strategy of radical exclusion (van Leeuwen, 2008) in the corpus of the current study is emblematic of the predominance of secular values in the power structures of the target language community. This type of constraint will probably shape the knowledge and beliefs of the textbook consumers, as Fairclough (1989, 2001) affirms, in a way that enhances the legitimacy of secular values at the expense of religious ones at the global scale. Although radical exclusion constitutes the predominant strategy towards religious values, the case can also be made that the monochromatic representation of social actors in a handful of images in the corpus is not impertinent to the religious values since the way, especially, female social actors are dressed in the monochromatically depicted images in the *Family and Friends series*, matches closely with van Leeuwen’s (2005) description of the church-prescribed dress code for women which reads “a head covering and a modest, long, loose simple dress in a restrained colour, cut in a style prescribed by the church, and worn fairly uniformly by women” (p. 58). The monochromatic depiction arguably represents a strategy for the discursive construction of *otherness*, which for the purposes of the current study related to those who hold religious beliefs, due to fact that color has an enormous effect on the extent to which a stimulus is mentally processed (van Leeuwen, 2008). Moreover, the monochromatic depiction seems to be aimed at reducing the affective engagement of the

audience with the values embedded in the images as color serves as an effective means through which to act on others, especially through the interpersonal function of *affect* (see Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002). Further justification for this reading of the aforementioned images comes from the fact that the clothing industry is “a site of social struggle” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 73) and it constitutes an important means of conveying one's attitudes and beliefs (Danesi, 2004; van Leeuwen, 2005).

Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework is not ignorant of the roles the social actors are assigned to play. Throughout the corpus, asymmetrical power relationships are, to a large extent, de-emphasized as especially in societal and entertaining roles social actors collaborate, that is, they do things with each other rather than to each other. What is more, except for the *Family and Friends series*, school or work uniforms, which homogenize social actors and, thus, reduce them to objects at the disposal of the powerful (van Leeuwen, 2008) do not feature prominently in the corpus. Besides, although asymmetrical power relations do appear in the corpus, especially with regard to institutional contexts such as education, work, and family, they are de-emphasized by being far less frequently depicted. This finding is in line with Fairclough's (2001) assertion that the discourse of social control tends to remove any surface markers of power. Put another way, by removing the surface markers of power, discourse “puts a rosy gloss” (Holborow, 2006, p. 88) on the actual workings of power in modern societies and contributes significantly to the “inculcation of self-disciplining practices” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 531).

The second part of van Leeuwen's framework refers to the way the social actors relate to the viewer. The first category is that of the distance. The medium shot was found to be the most frequent type of shot in all textbook series, in fact, far more frequently than the long shot and the close shot. The rationale behind the high frequency of the medium shot may lie in its informative function. It is likely that through the selection of the medium shot, the authors of the textbooks have intended to keep the language learners cognitively rather than emotionally involved in the language learning task. Regarding angle, all social actors have been depicted at eye-level which signifies, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert, lack of power differences between the social actors and the viewers. Finally, social actors have been depicted mostly as not gazing at the viewer. Lack of gaze represents the social actors in images as objects to be dispassionately examined (van Leeuwen, 2008). The common thread that runs through the use of the long shot, lack of power differences, and lack of gaze may all have to do with the western tradition of valuing "objective, dispassionate knowledge" (Kress

and van Leeuwen, 2006). The close shot, power differences, and the social actors gaze would get the language learners emotionally involved which runs counter with the educational goal of disseminating knowledge. Furthermore, the long shot reduces the informative value of the images. It seems logical, then, that the medium shot has been so frequently used; it informs the viewer while, at the same time, keeps them from being emotionally involved.

## Conclusion

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note that the actual workings of power in modern societies still linger on and have only become more difficult to locate. Such invisibility is rooted, in part, in the tendency for discourse to conceal the surface markers of power, as Fairclough (1989, 2001) and Holborow (2006) assert. This leads, in turn, to the emergence and sustenance of a simulated form of egalitarianism (Fairclough, 1989, 2001) nationally and globally. At the global scale, transnational institutions, as the Ideological State Apparatuses in Althusser's (1971) term, serve the vested interests of world powers (see Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In line with the current theoretical as well as the findings of the numerous empirical findings, the findings of the current study point to the persistence of various ideologies such as racism and gender bias in the discourse of global ELT materials.

In modern societies, social control is sustained predominantly through ideological assumptions embodied in discourse (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Viewed constructively (Martin and Rose, 2003, Martin, 2004), the exercise of consent can bring about social equality. Due, however, to the predominance of the social structures, in modern societies, that gives rise to unequal relations of power and, in turn, to the persistence of social inequalities, manipulation (van Dijk, 2006), at both national and global levels, is, to a large extent, considered negative. Resistance, defined as “a reaction by social subjects to the imposition of power” (Baker and Ellece, 2011, p. 120) has been put forward as an effective means of tackling manipulation. For resistance to be effective, “a critical consciousness of domination and its modalities” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 3) needs to be developed by people. Resistance against domination on the part of global institutions might be put up at the local level. That is to say, since hegemonic domination is established through the process of ‘interpellation’ (Althusser, 1971), local authorities can pursue a counter-interpellation policy mainly through raising the awareness of the public regarding the workings of domination.

The findings of the current study showed that discriminatory discourses predominate children and young-adult global ELT textbooks. Important implications can be drawn for all

the stakeholders involved and the processes of production and consumption of global ELT textbooks aimed at children and young-adults. On the production side, security agencies (see Kubota, 2006), publications, and textbook authors need to be committed to the positive, constitutive exercise of power(see Martin, 2004;Barlette, 2018) rather than insistence on the facilitation of global hegemonic domination (see Robinson, 2005). On the consumption side, targeted nation-states, curriculum planners, and language teaching institutions need to pursue a counter-appellation policy through either recontextualizing (Bernstein, 1990; Linell, 1998) the imported global ELT textbooks or raising the awareness of the targeted groups. Finally, it is necessary that English teachers avoid reducing themselves to “imperial troopers” (Edge, 2003, p. 701) and sound notes of caution to their students regarding the embedded ideological assumptions in the textbooks.

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